

301-303 East Henry Street
Savannah Victorian Historic District
Savannah
Chatham County
Georgia

GA-1169 V

HABS,
GA,
26-SAV,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISOTRICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SAVANNAH VICTORIAN HISTORIC DISTRICT

301-303 EAST HENRY STREET

HABS No. GA-1169V

Location: 301-303 East Henry Street, southeast corner of Lincoln and Henry Streets, Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia.

Present Owner: Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, P.O. Box B801, Savannah, Georgia 31412.

Present Use: Apartments.

Significance: This double tenement is a type of construction frequently seen in the Victorian District. This house will be renovated by Savannah Landmark as part of its program to provide Section B rental housing in the Victorian District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1890-1891.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original owner: Henry I. Seeman, an agent for the Hartford Life and Annuity Company and later the District Agent for the Travelers, Inc., Co., of Hartford. Seeman was also the organizer of the Wilmington Island Pleasure and Improvement Company. The Savannah Morning News reported on September 4, 1891: "H.L. Seeman two, two-story frame on Henry".
4. Alterations and additions: The rear of the house has been altered and the original rear porch has been replaced. The front doors have been altered to provide separate entrances to the upper and lower apartments.

For background information, see Savannah Victorian Historic District, HABS No. GA-1169.

B. Bibliography:

Savannah Morning News: September 4, 1891, 13/4. Located at Georgia Historical Society.

Prepared by: Beth Lattimore Reiter
Project Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
October, 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a double townhouse characterized by a central gable facing the street which is repeated in the pediment of the entrance porch. The columns on the porch are knobbed and support the porch gable which incorporates a sunburst motif.
2. Condition: Fair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The two-story house measures 41' across its four-bay front by 57'-9".
2. Foundations: The foundations are brick pier with spaced brick infill in most of the bays. The rear porch is supported on concrete block foundations with siding infill.
3. Wall construction: Wooden clapboard siding.
4. Structural system: Wood frame construction.
5. Porches, stoops: The one-story central front entrance porch is approached by six concrete steps. Three columns with knobbed shafts, plain bases and capitals, and two knobbed pilasters support a gabled canopy. Knobbed balusters divide the two sides of the separate entrances.

The two-story rear porch is supported by iron posts on the first story and by plain wooden posts with an iron railing on the second. An iron fire escape permits access to both levels.

6. Chimneys: Each side of the duplex is serviced by two stuccoed brick chimneys topped by corbeled caps.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways, and doors: The original set of hinged double doors topped by a three-light transom has been replaced by four individual frame doors with glass panes in the top half and raised panels below. A two-light transom tops each door. The doors are framed by molded cornerblock surrounds and open into an enclosed entrance vestibule.
 - b. Windows: A polygonal two-story bay projects at the front of each end of the duplex. The east bay (303) has had the first-story windows shortened and filled with commercial metal windows. The windows in the bays are one-over-one-light double-hung sash while those throughout the rest of the house are two-over-two-light sash.

There is a very narrow two-over-two window on the rear facade, but the rear facade has been altered so it is difficult to determine the original fenestration.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: A gable roof covers the main block, with gables projecting on the west and north facade. The north gable is filled by a decorative semicircular vent. The west gable is ornamented with radiating wooden strips over a wooden strip infill.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The deep cornice and front porch eaves are braced by scrolled brackets.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: Each half of the house was laid out on a side-hall plan, three rooms deep. The staircases have been enclosed to create private entrances to the upper and lower apartments.
2. Stairs: A single enclosed flight in each unit. Tapered balusters exist upstairs with a rectangular newel with a chamfered post with sunflower rosettes. The lower balusters and newel have been removed.
3. Floors: Hardwood floors throughout.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster walls with picture molding and two-part molded baseboards. The second-floor hall of 301 has sheetrocked wall surfaces, papered and painted.
5. Doorways, and doors: Raised four-panel frame doors are framed by molded cornerblock trim. The cornerblocks have sunflowers in the center. The only exception is the pair of sliding doors, framed by bull's-eye cornerblock trim, between the first-floor parlors of 303.

All second-floor doors have glass transoms. The rear doors are five-panel frame doors.

6. Decorative features and trim:

The wooden mantel shelf of 303's front parlor is supported by double colonnettes which in turn are supported on brackets. The opening has been enclosed and is vented for a space heater.

The mantel in the rear parlor has a boxed "cornice" under the rectangular shelf. There is a symmetrically reeded molding with small cornerblocks surrounding the rectangular opening. The opening is flanked by pilasters with console capitals.

The wooden mantels in 301's second-floor apartment have a rectangular shelf supported by double colonnettes which rest on engaged columns.

7. Hardware: The original door locks, escutcheons and porcelain knobs remain in the second floor of 301.
8. Mechanical systems:
 - a. Heating, ventilating: The houses were originally heated by fireplaces, which have been replaced by gas space heaters vented through the fireplaces. Ventilation was provided by transoms over the doors and by high ceilings.
 - b. Plumbing: The original bath in each house was located at the back of the second floor hall. A footed cast iron tub still exists in 301.
 - c. Lighting: Electrical wiring.

D. Site:

The house stands on the north half of the lot, built directly on the lot line. A large yard is at the back. A modern cinderblock wall with an iron gate surrounds the yard.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the City of Savannah, the Historic Preservation Section of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, Inc., and Historic Savannah Foundation. The recording project was completed during the summer of 1979 under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect; Eric Delony, Project Coordinator, Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, Inc.; Beth Lattimore Reiter, Project Historian, Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project, Inc.; and Susan Dornbusch, Project Supervisor, University of Virginia; with student architects Gregori Anderson (Howard University), David Fixler (Columbia University), Stephen Lauf (Temple University), and Tamara Peacock (University of Florida), at the HABS Office in Savannah, Georgia. The drawings were edited in the Washington office in September 1979 by architects Susan Dornbusch and Gregori Anderson. The historical and architectural data was reviewed and edited during October-November 1979 by staff historian Jan Cigliano. Photographs were taken in September 1979 by Walter Smalling, a staff photographer with the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. The documentation on the historic district will be used in the rehabilitation of the residences and in developing design guidelines for the area.